

Bunker

A-185

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE**EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY**

1972 NOV 24 PM 12 24

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ACTIVITY MORI/CDF per C03317559

State Dept. review
completed

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WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM**TOP SECRET SENSITIVE 241120Z NOV 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)**
SECTION 1 OF 2**FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0279 IMMEDIATE**
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

1. NHA CALLED ON ME YESTERDAY TO INFORM ME THAT PRESIDENT THIEU WOULD SEE ME THIS MORNING, BUT THIS MORNING TELEPHONED TO SAY THAT THIEU WAS AWAITING A REPORT FROM LAM IN PARIS AND WOULD, THEREFORE, POSTPONE MY APPOINTMENT UNTIL THIS AFTERNOON. IN THE MEANTIME, I HAVE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM NHA WRITTEN AT THIEU'S DIRECTION SAYING THAT THIEU HAS RECEIVED THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER AND IS AWAITING MORE COMPLETE REPORTS FROM AMBASSADOR LAM IN PARIS ON THE MEETINGS HELD NOVEMBER 22-23 BEFORE REPLYING TO THE PRESIDENT. THIEU ALSO INSTRUCTED NHA TO TRANSMIT THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS:

2. THIEU HAS INSTRUCTED AMBASSADOR LAM IN PARIS TO ASK YOU WHETHER YOU HAD DISCUSSED WITH THE COMMUNIST SIDE THIEU'S PROPOSITION RELATED "TO THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS WITHIN THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME AS THE ALLIED TROOPS AND AGREEMENT BY THE GVN TO DEMOBILIZE IMMEDIATELY AFTER COMPLETE WITHDRAWALS AN EQUAL NUMBER OF GVN FORCES". PRESIDENT THIEU CONSIDERS THIS A GREAT CONCESSION OF THE GVN AND HAS MADE THIS PROPOSAL WITH THE VIEW OF ACHIEVING MORE POSITIVE RESULTS FROM THE TALKS.

3. IN ADDITION TO THIS PROPOSAL, I.E., THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM AND THE DEMOBILIZATION BY ARVN OF AN EQUAL NUMBER, THIEU HAS ALSO INSTRUCTED AMBASSADOR LAM TO SAY TO YOU THAT, AFTER THIS FIRST PHASE, AND WHEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM HOLDS DIRECT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE NLF ON THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE SOUTH VIET-NAM, THE GVN IS PREPARED TO REDUCE ARVN STRENGTH AND DEMOBILIZE ITS TROOPS IN PARALLEL AND EQUALLY WITH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE MEMBERS OF THE NLF FORCES. THE GVN AND THE NLF WILL DISCUSS AND AGREE ON THE NUMBER AND TIMING OF THIS DEMOBILIZATION.

4. ACCORDING TO LAM'S REPORT ON NOVEMBER 22 AS A RESULT OF THE SECOND MEETING BETWEEN YOU AND LE DUC THO NOVEMBER 21, THE COMMUNISTS HAD AGREED TO CHANGE PRACTICALLY NOTHING AND STILL REMAINED INTRANSIGENT, MOST SPECIFICALLY ON THE "TWO LIFE AND DEATH PROBLEMS FOR

PROPOSITION RELATED "TO THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM
OF NORTH V No Objection to Declassification in Full 2010/05/20 : LOC-HAK-490-9-24-2
ALLIED TROOPS AND AGREEMENT BY THE GVN TO DEMOBILIZE IMMEDIATELY
AFTER COMPLETE WITHDRAWALS AN EQUAL NUMBER OF GVN FORCES".
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MAINED INTRANSIGENT, MOST SPECIFICALLY ON THE "TWO LIFE AND DEATH
PROBLEMS FOR US", I.E., THE THREE EQUAL COMPONENTS IN THE CNRC
AND THE NON-WITHDRAWAL OF NVA TROOPS. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS INTRAN-
SIGENCE, THE GVN FEELS THAT IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO MAKE ANY FURTHER
PROPOSAL OR COUNTERPROPOSAL. ALSO ON OTHER POINTS WHICH THE GVN
HAS ASKED TO BE CHANGED, SUCH AS THE REFERENCE TO THE THREE COUNTRIES
OF INDOCHINA, NORTH VIET-NAM STILL MAINTAINS ITS POSITION. (IN THIS
CONNECTION IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD KNOW WHAT CHANGES HAVE
BEEN AGREED TO.)

5. FOR THESE REASONS, PRESIDENT THIEU BELIEVES THAT UNLESS THE
MEETINGS ON NOVEMBER 22-23 PRODUCE OTHER ELEMENTS, ESPECIALLY
UNLESS NORTH VIET-NAM MAKES KNOWN ITS VIEWS ON THE GVN PROPOSAL
TO WITHDRAW NVA TROOPS AND TO DEMOBILIZE THE ARVN AS MENTIONED
ABOVE, THERE IS NO ELEMENT WHICH ENCOURAGES HIM TO CONTRIBUTE
MORE IDEAS TO YOU IN PARIS OR TO ME IN SAIGON. HE HOPES TO RECEIVE
TODAY YOUR ANSWERS CONCERNING THIS PROBLEM FROM PARIS OR ANSWERS
FROM THE USG IN WASHINGTON.

6. CONCERNING THE POINTS WHICH THE PRESIDENT RAISED IN HIS LETTER
TO PRESIDENT THIEU ON NOVEMBER 23, THIEU HAS ASKED NHA TO INFORM
ME THAT:

1) CONCERNING THE "PRESS CAMPAIGN EMANATING FROM SAIGON"
NHA OFFERS TO EXPLAIN THE ORIGIN AND CONTENT OF THE NEWS
WHICH WE CONSIDERED TO BE "UNFOUNDED ATTACKS ON THE DRAFT
AGREEMENT" OR THE PERSONAL ATTACKS AGAINST DR. KISSINGER.
(WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED A PRESS RELEASE FROM THE MINISTRY
OF INFORMATION DENYING THAT PERSONAL ATTACKS HAVE BEEN MADE
BY RADIO SAIGON AGAINST DR. KISSINGER. ALTHOUGH THE DENIAL
IS A LIE IT SHOWS THAT THIEU WAS STUNG BY THE PRESIDENT'S
LETTER INTO CALMING DOWN HIS PROPAGANDISTS.)

2) CONCERNING THE "DILATORY TACTICS", IT IS NOT THE
POLICY OF THE GVN TO ENGAGE IN SUCH TACTICS. RATHER
IT IS BECAUSE PRESIDENT THIEU WANTED TO KNOW THE RE-
ACTION OF THE COMMUNIST SIDE TO HIS "NEW VERY FORTHCOMING
PROPOSAL RELATING TO THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIET-

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WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE 241120Z NOV 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FINAL SECTION OF 2

FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0279 IMMEDIATE

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
NAMESE TROOPS AND REDUCTION OF THE ARVN STRENGTHS."

3) THE REASON FOR THE DELAY CONCERNING THE PROTOCOLS RELATED TO THE DRAFT AGREEMENT IS THE FACT THAT THE USG ENVISAGES THE PROTOCOLS ON THE BASIS OF THE NVA TROOPS HAVING THE RIGHT TO STAY IN SOUTH VIET-NAM WHILE THE GVN ENVISAGES PROTOCOLS AS BASED ON THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF NVA TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM INTO NORTH VIET-NAM. THEREFORE, IF THE BASIC PROBLEM OF WITHDRAWAL IS NOT RESOLVED CLEARLY, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THE GVN MILITARY STAFF TO WORK ON THE RELATED POINTS IN THE PROTOCOLS.

7. FINALLY, THIEU ASKED ME TO REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT THAT HE DENIES COMPLETELY POINTS RAISED BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS LETTER ACCORDING TO WHICH PRESIDENT THIEU IS ENGAGING IN DILATORY TACTICS IN AN EFFORT TO SCUTTLE THE AGREEMENT.

8. COMMENT: THIEU SEEMS TO FEEL THAT HE HAS MADE A "MAJOR CONCESSION" IN HIS PROPOSAL TO REDUCE RVNAF TROOPS TO CORRESPOND TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF NVA TROOPS AND TO FOLLOW UP WITH A FURTHER DEMOBILIZATION IN PARALLEL WITH NLF DEMOBILIZATION. THERE APPEARS, HOWEVER, TO BE NO "GIVE" IN HIS POSITION ON NVA WITHDRAWAL. IN FACT, IF ANYTHING, HIS POSITION SEEMS TO HAVE HARDENED, ENCOURAGED PROBABLY BY THE FACT THAT HE FEELS HE HAS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR HIS POSITION AND IS ENCOURAGED BY HARDLINERS SUCH AS VICE PRESIDENT HUONG. IT SEEMS TO ME, AS REPORTED IN SAIGON 0267, NOVEMBER 13, THAT ASSUMING THIEU CONCLUDES THE TERMS WE ARE ABLE TO SECURE IN PARIS ARE UNACCEPTABLE, HE HAS TWO ALTERNATIVES:

--DECIDE TO GO IT ALONE, BELIEVING THAT WE MAY MAKE A SEPARATE AGREEMENT WITH HANOI, BUT THAT THE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT WE HAVE PROVIDED TO RVNAF WOULD ENABLE THEM TO CARRY ON THE WAR AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HE PROBABLY HOPES THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE HIM MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT, ALTHOUGH HE KNOWS THAT WE WOULD NOT PROVIDE ANY AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT.

-- THAT AFTER WE HAVE DONE OUR UTMOST TO SECURE THE CHANGES HE HAS REQUESTED, HE WILL ACCEDE TO THE AGREEMENT BECAUSE HE REALIZES THAT HE HAS NO OTHER VIABLE ALTERNATIVE, INDICATING THAT HE HAS FELT COMPELLED TO DO SO SINCE THERE IS NO OTHER WAY AVAILABLE TO HIM. AT THE SAME TIME, HE WOULD CALL ON THE NATIONALISTS CLOSE RANKS IN ANTICIPATION OF THE FORTHCOMING POLITICAL CONTEST WITH THE NLF. HE MIGHT WISH TO ATTACH A DEMURRER INDICATING THE POINTS IN THE AGREEMENT WITH WHICH HE DISAGREED.

9. I THOUGHT THEN, NOVEMBER 13, THAT THIEU WAS MOST LIKELY TO FOLLOW THE SECOND COURSE. I STILL THINK THIS IS THE MORE PROBABLE, PARTICULARLY IF THE PRESIDENT HOLDS TO HIS DETERMINATION, AS CLEARLY EXPRESSED IN HIS LETTERS TO THIEU, TO PROCEED TO A FINAL AGREEMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, GIVEN THIEU'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN CRITICISM OF THE AGREEMENT WHICH HAVE CONTINUED UNABATED AND ENCOURAGED BY WIDESPREAD SUPPORT WHICH HE HIMSELF HAS STIMULATED HE MAY HAVE GOTTEN HIMSELF INTO A POSITION FROM WHICH IT WILL BE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR HIM TO RETREAT. ALL OF US, I THINK, HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO KEEP HIM FROM PAINTING HIMSELF INTO A CORNER, BUT I AM NOT SURE AT THIS POINT WHETHER WE HAVE SUCCEEDED. NEVERTHELESS, PREPARATIONS BY THE GVN IN ANTICIPATION OF A CEASEFIRE ARE GOING AHEAD UNABATED, IN FACT ARE BEING ACCELERATED. THE MILITARY COMMANDERS ARE TAKING THE PROSPECT OF A CEASEFIRE CALMLY AND DO NOT SEEM TO BE DISTURBED BY IT; IN FACT, THEY SEEM TO BE LESS DISTURBED BY THE PROSPECT THAN THE GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON, ALTHOUGH THEY, TOO, STRONGLY SUPPORT THE DEMAND FOR WITHDRAWAL OF NVA FORCES FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM. THIS COULD BE INTERPRETED AS INDICATING THIEU UNDERSTANDS THAT ULTIMATELY HE WILL HAVE TO GO ALONG.

10. WARM REGARDS.

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